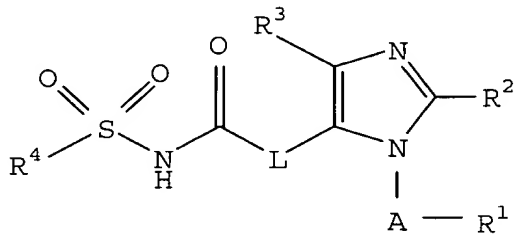
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An imidazole compound of the formula (I):



(I)

wherein

R^1 is an aryl which is substituted by halogen at the ortho position relative to the point of attachment of $\underline{R^1}$ ~~R_1~~ to A, and also substituted by substituent(s) selected from the group consisting of (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) bromo, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) aryloxy and (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl or R^1 is a heterocyclic group substituted by substituent(s) selected from the group consisting of (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) halogen, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) aryloxy and (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl;

R^2 is a lower alkyl;

R^3 is a hydrogen, halogen, lower alkyl or nitro;

R^4 is (1) a lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, (2) aryl optionally substituted by lower alkenyl, (3) lower alkyl, or (4) heterocyclic group optionally substituted by halogen;

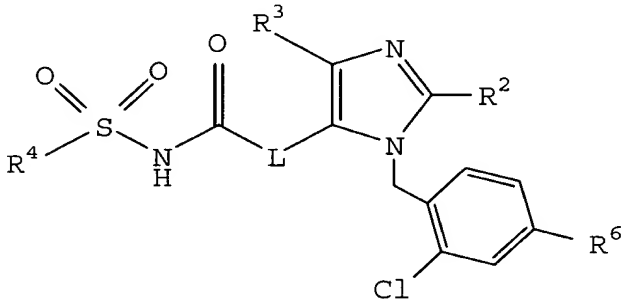
A is a lower alkylene; and

L is a single bond, lower alkenylene or lower alkylene optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, or $-X-CH_2-$ wherein X is -O-, NR^5 wherein R^5 is hydrogen or lower alkyl, or -S-,

where aryl is defined as unsubstituted aryl or alkyl-substituted aryl,

or a salt thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The imidazole compound of claim 1, which has the formula (IA):



(IA)

wherein

R^2 is methyl;

R^3 is chlorine;

R^4 is (1) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (2) aryl, (3) lower alkyl, or (4) heterocyclic group optionally substituted by halogen;

R^6 is (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) bromine, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) lower alkyl optionally

substituted by aryloxy, or (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl; and

L is ethenylene,

or a salt thereof.

Claim 3 (Original): The imidazole compound of claim 2, wherein R^4 is aryl, or lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, R^6 is bromine, lower alkenyl substituted by aryl, lower alkynyl substituted by aryl, or lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl, or a salt thereof.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The imidazole compound of claim 1, wherein R^1 is heterocyclic group substituted by substituent(s) selected from the group consisting of (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) halogen, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) aryloxy and (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl, or a salt thereof.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The imidazole compound of claim 1, which is:

(1) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(2-furyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(2) (2E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(2-furyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(3) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(2-thienyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(4) (2E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(2-thienyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(5) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(6) (2E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(7) (E)-3-(1-(4-bromo-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(8) (E)-3-(1-(4-bromo-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(9) (E)-3-[4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl]-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(10) (E)-N-benzenesulfonyl-3-[4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl]-2-propenamide,

(11) (E)-3-[4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl]-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(12) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(13) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((5-chloro-2-thienyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(14) (E)-N-((5-bromo-2-thienyl)sulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-phenylbenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(15) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-propoxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(16) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-propoxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(17) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(18) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(19) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((cyclopentyl)methyloxy)-benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(20) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((cyclopentyl)methyloxy)-benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(21) (2E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((cyclopentyl)methyloxy)-benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(22) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((cyclohexyl)methyloxy)-benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(23) (2E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((cyclohexyl)methyloxy)-benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(24) (E)-3-(1-(4-benzyloxy-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(25) (E)-3-(1-(4-benzyloxy-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(26) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(methylthio)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(27) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(methylthio)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(28) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(29) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(trifluoromethyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(30) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenoxymethyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(31) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenoxymethyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(32) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-nitrobenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(33) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-nitrobenzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(34) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(35) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(38) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(39) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(40) (E)-N-(1-butanesulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(41) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(42) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(43) (E)-N-(1-butanesulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(44) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(45) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(46) (E)-N-(1-butanesulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(2-phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(47) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-((3-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)pyridin-2-yl)methyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(48) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-((3-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)pyridin-2-yl)methyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(49) (E)-3-(1-(4-(tert-butoxycarbonylamino)-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(50) (E)-3-(1-(4-(tert-butoxycarbonylamino)-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(51) (E)-3-(1-(4-(tert-butoxycarbonylamino)-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(52) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(53) (E)-3-(1-(4-bromo-2-chlorobenzyl)-4-chloro-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(54) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(55) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(56) (E)-N-(1-butanesulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(57) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(58) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(59) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(60) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(4-methylbenzenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(61) (E)-N-(1-butanesulfonyl)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-2-propenamide,

(62) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(63) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-((E)-2-phenylethenyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(64) (E)-3-(1-(4-bromo-2-chlorobenzyl)-2,4-dimethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(65) (E)-3-(4-bromo-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(66) (E)-3-(1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-4-ethyl-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(67) (E)-2-benzyl-3-(1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(68) (E)-3-(1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-(1-pentyl)-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(69) (E)-3-(1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-(3-pyridyl)methyl-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(70) (E)-3-(1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-methyl-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(71) (E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-2-methyl-N-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(72) 4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methyl-5-((E)-2-phenylethenesulfonylcarbamoyl)-1H-imidazole,

(73) (4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methyl-1H-imidazol-5-yl)methyl N-(4-methylbenzenesulfonyl)carbamate,

(74) 4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-5-((3-(4-methylbenzenesulfonyl)ureido)methyl)-2-methyl-1H-imidazole,

(75) 4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-5-((3-(4-methylbenzenesulfonyl)-1-methylureido)methyl)-2-methyl-1H-imidazole or

(76) 3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylacethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-(E)-2-propenamide,

or a salt thereof.

Claim 6 (Original): The imidazole compound of claim 1, which is:

(E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propanamide,

(E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(1-pentyloxy)benzyl)-2-methylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(((E)-2-phenylethenyl)sulfonyl)-2-propanamide,

(E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((4-methylbenzene)sulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

(E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-(1-pentanesulfonyl)-2-propenamide or

(E)-3-(4-chloro-1-(2-chloro-4-(phenylethynyl)benzyl)-2-ethylimidazol-5-yl)-N-((E)-1-penten-1-ylsulfonyl)-2-propenamide,

or a salt thereof.

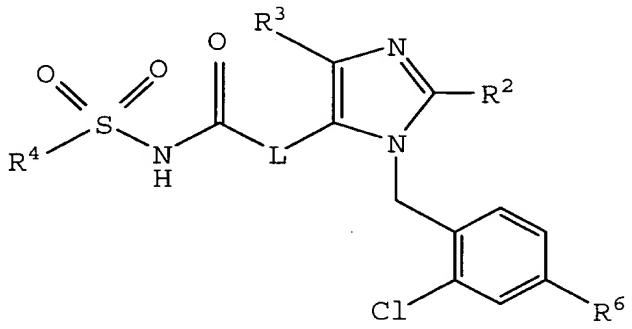
Claim 7 (Original): A pharmaceutical composition containing the imidazole compound of claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical preparation containing the imidazole compound of claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which is used as an agent for the prophylaxis or treatment of impaired glucose tolerance disorder, diabetes, gestational diabetes, diabetic complications, insulin resistance syndrome, polycystic ovary syndrome, hyperlipidemia, atherosclerosis, cardiovascular diseases, hyperglycemia, pancreatitis, osteoporosis, hyperuricemia, hypertension, inflammatory bowel diseases or skin disorders related to an anomaly of differentiation of epidermic cells.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A method of preventing ~~and/or~~ or treating a disease in a patient treatable with a pharmaceutical compound having hypoglycemic activity selected from the group consisting of impaired glucose tolerance disorder, diabetes, gestational diabetes, diabetic complications, insulin resistance syndrome, polycystic ovary syndrome, hyperlipidemia, atherosclerosis, cardiovascular diseases, hyperglycemia, pancreatitis, osteoporosis, hyperuricemia, hypertension, inflammatory bowel diseases, and skin disorders related to an anomaly of differentiation of epidermic cells, which comprises administering to the patient the hypoglycemically active imidazole compound of claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): An imidazole compound of the formula:



wherein

R^2 is a lower alkyl;

R^3 is a hydrogen, halogen, lower alkyl or nitro;

R^4 is (1) a lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, (2) aryl optionally substituted by lower alkenyl, (3) lower alkyl, or (4) heterocyclic group optionally substituted by halogen;

R^6 is (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) bromine, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) lower alkyl optionally substituted by aryloxy, or (11) amino optionally substituted by lower ~~alkoxycarboxyl~~ alkoxycarbonyl or lower alkyl; and

L is (1) lower alkenylene or lower alkylene optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, (2) $-O-CH_2-$, (3) $-NR^5-CH_2-$ [wherein R^5 is hydrogen or lower alkyl], or (4) $-S-CH_2-$,

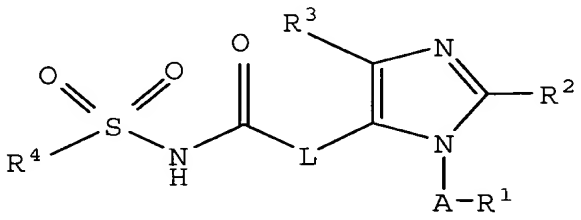
where aryl is defined as unsubstituted aryl or alkyl-substituted aryl,

or a salt thereof.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The imidazole compound of claim 11, wherein R^3 is chlorine and L is ethenylene.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The imidazole compound of claim 12, wherein R^6 is lower alkenyl optionally substituted by phenyl or lower alkynyl optionally substituted by phenyl.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A method for producing an imidazole compound of the formula (I):



(I)

wherein

R^1 is an aryl which is substituted by halogen at the ortho position relative to the point of attachment of R_1 to A, and also substituted by substituent(s) selected from the group consisting of (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) bromo, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) aryloxy and (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl or R^1 is a heterocyclic group substituted by substituent(s) selected from the group consisting of (1) aryl, (2) heterocyclic group, (3) halogen, (4) halo(lower)alkyl, (5) lower alkylthio, (6) nitro, (7) lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl, (8) lower alkynyl optionally substituted by aryl, (9) lower alkoxy optionally substituted by cyclo(lower)alkyl or aryl, (10) aryloxy and (11) amino optionally substituted by protected carboxy or lower alkyl;

R^2 is a lower alkyl;

R^3 is a halogen, lower alkyl or nitro;

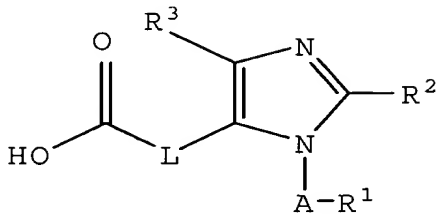
R^4 is (1) a lower alkenyl optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, (2) aryl optionally substituted by lower alkenyl, (3) lower alkyl, or (4) heterocyclic group optionally substituted by halogen;

A is a lower alkylene; and

L is (1) lower alkenylene or lower alkylene optionally substituted by aryl or heterocyclic group, (2) $-O-CH_2-$, (3) $-NR^5-CH_2-$ [wherein R^5 is hydrogen or lower alkyl], or (4) $-S-CH_2-$,

where aryl is defined as unsubstituted aryl or alkyl-substituted aryl,

or a salt thereof, which method comprising reacting a compound of the formula (II):



(II)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, A and L are as defined above,

or reactive derivative at carboxy thereof or a salt thereof with a compound of the formula (III):

$$R^4\text{-}SO_2NH_2 \qquad \text{(III)}$$

wherein R^4 is as defined above,

or a salt thereof.